SECRET

RECEIVED F Schmelzer 7/2/85 E-5

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US-Saudi Relations--AWACS

Background

These points provide information on the Saudi enhancement package, including:

- what the package consists of;
- timing of Congressional notification; and
- rationale for the sale.

TALKING POINTS

-- AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE DECIDED TO SELL TO SAUDI ARABIA A NUMBER OF ITEMS TO IMPROVE THE AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES OF ITS AIR FORCE.

-- THE AWACS AERIAL SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT IS THE ITEM IN THE PACKAGE WHICH HAS RECEIVED THE MOST ATTENTION. ALSO INCLUDED ARE:

- AIM-9L ALL-ASPECT AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES;
- CONFORMAL FUEL TANKS FOR THE SAUDIS' F-15 AIRCRAFT; AND
- AERIAL REFUELING AIRCRAFT (KC-707S).

-- WE PLAN TO PROVIDE INFORMAL NOTIFICATION OF THE SALE TO CONGRESS EARLY IN THE SUMMER. FORMAL NOTIFICATION IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE IN EARLY FALL, WITH THE VOTES PROBABLY TAKEN IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER.

-- THE SALE IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE US, SAUDI ARABIA, AND THE WEST BECAUSE IT WILL SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE

THE SAUDIS' CAPABILITIES TO DEFEND THEIR OIL FIELDS AND INSTALLATIONS. AWACS, FOR INSTANCE, CAN GREATLY INCREASE WARNING TIME OF A LOW-LEVEL AIR ATTACK. THE OTHER ENHANCEMENTS WILL INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SAUDI ARABIA'S SMALL NUMBER OF INTERCEPTOR AIRCRAFT.

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-- AS YOU ARE WELL AWARE, THIS SALE HAS GENERATED A GOOD DEAL OF CONTROVERSY. WE FACE A TOUGH, UPHILL FIGHT IN CONGRESS, BUT WE EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO PRESENT A PACKAGE WHICH WILL SWING A NUMBER OF VOTES OUR WAY.